

Gamefreaks

PLAYSTATION 2

PC

PS ONE

XBOX

GAME BOY ADVANCE

GAMECUBE



FREE

RATCHET & CLANK

AGE OF MYTHOLOGY

UNREAL TOURNAMENT 2003

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

WRC II EXTREME

TIME SPLITTERS 2

STAR FOX ADVENTURES

BLINX THE TIME SWEEPER

HITMAN 2

QUANTUM REDSHIFT

FIFA FOOTBALL 2003

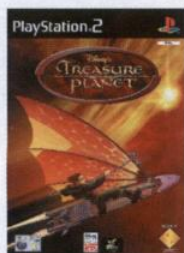
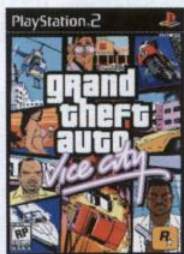
NEED FOR SPEED HOT PURSUIT 2

LORD OF THE RINGS THE TWO TOWERS

GAME WATCH & GALLERY ADVANCE

AND MORE

Cut out and keep Christmas List.



This Christmas remember to be good and remember there is only one gaming platform with all these titles.

- ☐ Tekken 4
- ☐ Ninja Assault
- ☐ This is Soccer 2003
- ☐ Grand Theft Auto: Vice City
- ☐ Onimusha 2
- ☐ Formula One 2002
- ☐ Treasure Planet
- ☐ WRC II Extreme
- ☐ Ratchet & Clank
- ☐ Kingdom Hearts
- ☐ Tomb Raider: Angel Of Darkness
- ☐ Pro Evolution Soccer 2
- ☐ Alpine Racer 3
- ☐ The Getaway
- ☐ V8 Supercars
- ☐ Stuntman
- ☐ Devil May Cry 2
- ☐ Ty the Tasmanian Tiger
- ☐ Simpsons Skateboarding
- ☐ Lord of The Rings: The Two Towers
- ☐ WWF Smackdown: Shut your Mouth!
- ☐ Red Faction 2
- ☐ Burnout 2
- ☐ Undies
- ☐ Socks
- ☐ Bike
- ☐ Blow up Angelina Jolie doll

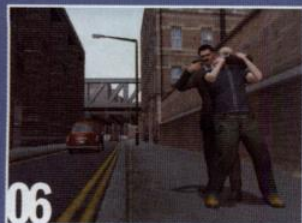
PlayStation®2

THE ONLY PLACE. THE THIRD PLACE.

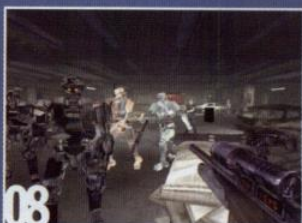


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thank you

Adrian, Amanda, Anne, Annie, Barney, Beanie, Becca, Ben, Casey, Chris, Craig, Daniel, Darren, Dave, Dean, Debbie, Deborah, Ewan, Gamer Network, Izzy, Kenny, Lenska, Luc, Margie, Margaret, Mark, Matthew, Mike, Neal, Pam, Paul, Photonic, Pip, Poon, Pulp, Rachel, Robyn, Scotty, Steve, Teresa, Wilf and Yunuen.

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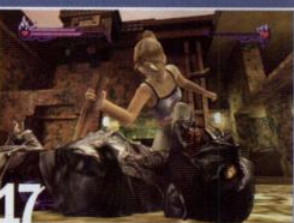
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read me

On the cover this month, we have Ratchet and Clank, SCE's congenial new platformer with a cute feline hero, a robot and an arsenal of weapons that would make George Bush Jr. jealous.

Other PS2 titles reviewed this month include WRC II Extreme, FIFA Football 2003, Hitman 2 with previews for The Getaway, Ty the Tasmanian Tiger and Tomb Raider Angel of Darkness.

We have some huge titles for PC gamers this month: the long awaited follow up to Age of Empires is finally here and on page 14, we unlock some of the hidden wonders in Microsoft's new RTS Age of Mythology.

Unreal Tournament 2003 sees the return of everyone's favourite blood sport; we take a look at the carnage it on page 16.

There's also a lot inside this month for Xbox fans - we have Buffy the Vampire Slayer, a surprisingly good 3D action adventure from EA Games starring everyone's favourite teen vampire killer.

Also TimeSplitters 2, Blinx the Time Sweeper, Need for Speed Hot Pursuit 2, Quantum Redshift and a preview for the soon-to-be-released exciting action title Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell.

Star Fox Adventures is the new 3D adventure title for the GameCube: its graphics need to be seen to be believed and for the Game Boy Advance, we feature Lord of the Rings, Metroid Fusion and Nintendo's Game and Watch Gallery 4.

There's tons more inside and lots of cool prizes to win so make sure you check out those on page 26.

More from us next month - Adios Amigos!

SONY UNVEIL BROADBAND PLANS

SCENZ release details of PS2 broadband

Sony Computer Entertainment New Zealand (SCENZ) today confirmed an announcement by Sony Computer Entertainment Europe (SCEE) that PlayStation 2 broadband network gaming will be launched in the northern hemisphere Spring of 2003, beginning with the UK. This will be followed by a phased rollout into Germany, France, Spain, Australia and other SCEE territories including New Zealand throughout 2003 and 2004.

The SCEE announcement follows the highly successful launch of PlayStation 2 online gaming earlier this year in North America and Japan. In both regions, PlayStation 2 has become the leading online console gaming platform.

In North America, SOCOM: US Navy Seals, the first online console game with voice communication between players, and Electronic Arts' Madden NFL 2003, have become instant online hits with hundreds of thousands of regular players taking part. In Japan, there are already over 100,000 PlayStation 2 Computer Entertainment Systems connected to the network. Commenting on SCEE's plans for the launch of network gaming, Chris Deering, President of SCEE says "PlayStation 2 owners with broadband Internet access will be able to purchase a Network Adaptor and immediately start playing a great selection of multiplayer games online.

"It will be simple to set up, exciting to play and affordable. Our philosophy is to have a very diverse and inclusive platform that will enable content companies, games publishers and ISP portals to provide consumers with the broadest selection of new online experiences and entertainment from a variety of sources."

Steve Dykes, Managing Director at SCENZ, says: "I have no doubt that the line-up of innovative network-enhanced PlayStation games from Sony Computer Entertainment studios and from our publishing partners, when coupled with the simplicity and affordability of our network gaming pack, will accelerate broadband adoption in New Zealand and provide a catalyst for rapid expansion of the total gaming market."



Playing games online through your PS2 is fast becoming a reality, though we have a little while to wait in this country. 175,000 gamers are already playing SOCOM: US Navy Seals regularly online in the US

MCRAE SPEAKS

Better late than never



I know we promised a Colin McRae interview for last month's issue but unfortunately Colin has been busy lately, changing teams and crashing cars and such, and here at Gamefreaks, we're always happy to cut some slack.

Gamefreaks: Can you tell us about some of the new features in Colin McRae Rally 3?

Colin McRae: Apart from the new consoles, the game is hugely more detailed. There are fully modelled drivers, updated physics so the car handles more realistically plus a unique 1-player mode where you play as me for the first time.

GF: Apart from your own titles, what other games have you played and enjoyed?

CM: I like the TOCA series, especially V8 Supercars!

GF: Apart from lending your name to the game, what role do you generally play during the development of a title?

CM: I have mainly focussed on the handling of the car. I have driven the game throughout the course of the project and have provided continuous feedback commenting on the car, the tracks, the surfaces, how the car behaves etc. Nicky Grist has written pace notes for every stage of the game to make sure that the game is as accurate as possible. It's been a great team effort.

GF: There are a lot of Rally titles around nowadays, yet the Colin McRae series always seems to lead the way. What do you think gives Codemasters the edge?

CM: The focus in the development of the Colin McRae series has been on realism and playability so Codemasters have established themselves as the brand leaders in rallying games.

GF: Have you ever driven a Formula One car and do you think Michael Schumacher would be any good at Rally?

CM: Yes, I drove a Jordan at Silverstone in 1996. Michael Schumacher should come and give rallying a try some time.

GF: What's your favourite country to visit, that you've raced in?

CM: New Zealand of course!

GF: If you found out that Nintendo were the new sponsor for your team, would you drive a car with a 10ft Pikachu painted on it?

CM: What's a Pikachu?

NEW XBOX TITLES ON SHOW

Gamefreaks went along to Microsoft's X02 preview event

The recent X02 event was held at Microsoft House Auckland showcasing the latest upcoming Xbox titles.

Some of the titles on show included Colin McRae Rally 3.0, Turok Evolution, Blinx the Time Sweeper, Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2, and Splinter Cell just to name a few.

Alan Bowman of Microsoft, delivered key points to the assembled media and Nic Fillingham (Australian Xbox division) gave a technical breakdown of the Xbox comparing it to other consoles in the marketplace.

A highlight was the demo of Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell which looked fantastic showing off the Xbox's light and shading technology.

Various Xbox accessories were on display - House of the Dead 3 played superbly with a Mad Catz Light Gun who also unveiled their steering wheel complete with a cool LED display.

With so many great games on display, it seems as if the best is yet to come for Xbox fans.



LIVE THE EPIC MOVIES!

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SPLINTER CELL

PLATFORM: XBOX ■ PUBLISHER: UBISOFT ■ RELEASE: NOVEMBER

After a strong showing at this year's E3, Splinter Cell is definitely one of the most highly anticipated games for the Xbox: and it's almost here.

Imagine Metal Gear Solid with better visuals and gadgets galore, wrapped up in espionage and hi-tech, with detail provided by the meticulous Tom Clancy and you'll have a pretty good idea of what to expect.

Assuming the role of highly trained operative Sam Fisher: you're a member of the top secret "black-ops" sub-agency The Third Echelon.

The lithe agent Fisher makes Solid Snake gawky by comparison though there are numerous Metal Gearisms throughout.

Players can lurk in the dark as the enemy walks harmlessly by, and then seize them, questioning them at gunpoint to gain information vital to your mission and/or shoot them.

Your missions are a mixture of 3D action, stealth and good, wholesome violence – aided by a huge array of sophisticated devices and weapons.

Just the view of the world through the heat sensitive night goggles is worth the price of admission.



TOMB RAIDER ANGEL OF DARKNESS

PLATFORM: PLAYSTATION 2 ■ PUBLISHER: INFOGRAMES ■ RELEASE: JANUARY



The exiled queen of video gaming is set to make a stunning comeback this summer.

Tomb Raider Angel of Darkness looks like a truly dramatic return to form for Lara who suffered at the hands of an inevitable back lash towards the end of last century.

In her newest adventure, and the first ever on the PS2, Lara will be able to interact a lot more with her surroundings and the various characters in the game – for the first time ever, she can chat with AI cast members who provide clues and information that could later help in the overall mission.

Another twist is Lara's new evolving character – as the game progresses, players will be rewarded for solving complicated puzzles with greater jumping ability, upper body strength and so on.

Graphically, the series has made huge strides – Lara herself is now made up of more than 5000 polygons compared to 500 in previous titles so she's looking better than ever and even more worthy of worship.

METROID FUSION

PLATFORM: GAME BOY ADVANCE ■ PUBLISHER: NINTENDO ■ RELEASE: NOVEMBER

The Game Boy Advance continues to gain in popularity due to the strength and variety of new and retro titles but contrary to popular belief, Metroid Fusion on the GBA is not an old game reborn: it's actually a brand new sequel for the old SNES Classic Super Metroid.

Blending all the imagination and playability of a retro 80s title with the look and control of a modern game was a challenge for Nintendo, who have remained true to the formula.

That said, Metroid Fusion has many new features, including multi-layered backgrounds and foregrounds, giving a more textured, almost three dimensional look to some levels.

It won't take long for you to pick up the story – essentially it involves the wanton destruction of a variety of aliens from within a giant combat exoskeleton.

Nintendo are quiet about Metroid Fusions' link up option with the GameCube title Metroid Prime – we'll keep you posted on this encouraging feature with more game details in next month's Christmas issue.



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THE GETAWAY

PLATFORM: PLAYSTATION 2 ■ PUBLISHER: SCEE ■ RELEASE: DECEMBER

After playing The Getaway, our initial thoughts were that Brit film maker Guy Ritchie must have had a hand in here somewhere.

The soundtrack, the attitude and the violent, yet expertly handled, action is the PS2 equivalent of one of Ritchie's slick gangster flicks.

The actual gameplay is similar to that seen in GTA3: you can 'borrow' any car you find and there's always some 'geezer' up for a good fist fight.

The narrative unfolds via intermittent FMV sequences, each a genuine highlight thanks to Sony filming each scene and then rendering over the top for an eerily authentic look.

Characters in the game move well thanks to the accurate motion capture – you will dive and roll away from gunfire, back up against walls and even snatch a hostage from behind to use as a human shield.

Early reports of handling issues appear to have been ironed out and we found motoring around virtual London a joy.

The games almost non-stop action and the adult themes are sure to be a hit with gamers when The Getaway releases next month.



MARIO PARTY 4

PLATFORM: GAMECUBE ■ PUBLISHER: NINTENDO ■ RELEASE: NOVEMBER

Party games: love them or loathe them, one thing is for sure, they seldom get played at the really good parties.

Anyone familiar with the party genre knows that diversity is order of the day and Mario Party 4 is the biggest bash ever featuring as many as fifty mini-games specifically designed to be played concurrently by as many as four party-goers.

Mario Party 4 features wide-ranging gameplay options including story mode, mini-game mode, party mode as well as a section that lets you unlock various options.

There's a huge variety here, the changing styles of play will see you racing one minute and shooting hoops the next, so there's never a dull moment.

There ain't no party like an S-Club party, unless you like to do your partying on the Gamecube that is.

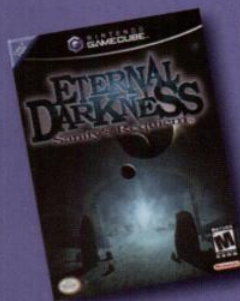


THERE'S MORE THAN ONE WAY TO PLAY³



STAR FOX ADVENTURES
FOX MCCLOUD TOUCHES DOWN ON DINOSAUR PLANET FOR HIS FIRST ADVENTURE OUTSIDE THE COCKPIT!

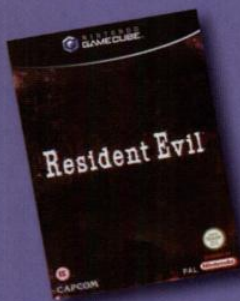
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MARIO PARTY 4
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(OUT NOVEMBER 22)



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TY THE TASMANIAN TIGER

PLATFORM: PLAYSTATION 2 ■ PUBLISHER: EA GAMES ■ RELEASE: NOVEMBER

Not to be outdone, EA Games have a brand new platformer this summer complete with a cute, animal protagonist from across the Tasman.

Developed in Australia by Krome Studios, Ty the Tasmanian Tiger is a 3D action platformer full of hilarious Aussie characters set in various Australia locations, including the Blue Mountains, the Outback and the Great Barrier Reef.

As the last known Tasmanian Tiger (extinct in real life) in Australia, Ty sets out to investigate the possible existence of another of his kind.

Gamefreaks got to take a look at Ty the Tasmanian Tiger at EA's recent media event, and apart from good looks and slick presentation, there is a lot of humour in this title.

The gameplay is typical of most platformers – accurate jumping, exploration, commandeering various vehicles and collecting objects will take up most of your time with frequent boss battles and mini-boss battles providing the action.

Titles like Cricket, Rugby and even AFL are all commercial curiosities rather than proven unit shifters but EA's commitment to localisation and creating titles specific for the various territories is unwavering.



THE TERMINATOR: DAWN OF FATE

PLATFORM: PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX ■ PUBLISHER: INFOGRAMES ■ RELEASE: NOVEMBER



This 3D action title is based on events before the original Terminator film: it tells of post-apocalyptic humanities struggle for survival against Sky Net, the rogue supercomputer hell bent on wiping us all out.

The game opens with a wonderfully crafted FMV sequence, comparable to the 'flashback' scenes seen during in first film - Terminator: Dawn of Fate features ten huge levels and a wide range of devastating weaponry.

The game plays out mainly as a 3D action title with players able to switch to first-person at any time

(usually during the shootouts) though you cannot move while in this view, which makes it tough to avoid the hail of hot lead that tends to fly around whenever a Terminator is near.

Completing various tasks in each level allows you to buy ammo, health armour and various upgrades in between levels.

Gamefreaks got to take a look at the PS2 version with the Xbox title on the way as well: we'll bring more news on both in next month's issue.

SEGA SOCCER SLAM

PLATFORM: PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE ■ PUBLISHER: INFOGRAMES ■ RELEASE: NOVEMBER

With its three-per-side, semi-violent concept, Sega Soccer Slam is the perfect marriage of FIFA's on-the-pitch grandeur and screwball SSX-like humour.

Sega Soccer Slam is only loosely related to the beautiful game: there is a goal at both ends of the miniature pitch and the idea is to kick the ball into one of these but that's about where the similarities stop.

In SSS, each team contains only three players, usually larger than life characters, more akin to a 3D fighting game than a sports title - but then this is no ordinary sports title.

Passing is straightforward and generally toe-to-toe, and the power bar comes into play whenever you shoot on goal.

Sega have erased the seriousness of football from this game, the tackles are like something out of WWF.



Unleash

THE WRATH OF THE GODS



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RATCHET & CLANK

PLATFORM: PLAYSTATION 2 ■ PUBLISHER: SCE ■ DEVELOPER: INSOMNIAC ■ PRICE: \$119.95 ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW



Ratchet & Clank has both adventure and charm to burn, with futuristic worlds, fantastic weapons and a ferrel feline hero

Platform gaming titles rely on only a few key factors – strong lead characters and good control are a must, but nowadays you need more, you need nifty gadgets and engaging sidekicks.

Developers Insomniac insist that Ratchet and Clank is no mere platformer.

In this new action-platform title for PlayStation 2, players assume the role of a wisecracking, feline mechanic Ratchet, who teams up with Clank – a weird robot who doubles as a utility backpack.

Set in the future, Ratchet & Clank is a visual feast made up of spacious levels littered with towering skyscrapers and fleets of vehicles soaring through the skies, reminiscent of Blade Runner, or Episode Two.

But all of this is just in the background: the real action is on the ground with our feline



hero and his robotic backpack.

Our two heroes set out to defeat the evil Chairman Drek who is constructing a new planet to replace his dangerously polluted world by means of his army of robots who soon silence any dissent.

Ratchet & Clank is possibly the smoothest looking game on the PS2 – last year's Jak and Daxter is still one of the best looking games on the system but Ratchet and Clank takes it a step further.

The Ratchet & Clank universe is a futuristic wonder and you'll wind up on a variety of planets, complete with bustling alien cities, giant space stations and vast oceans.

Unlike other platform titles, the onus is not on collecting as random items (or bananas) – Clank uses a magnetic field to collect nuts and bolts and there are various power ups but the idea is to kick butt, not horde junk.

When quizzed on their influences, developers Insomniac had this to say – “There were a LOT of people participating in the design of the game and we all had different influences. But some of the big ones for me were: our own Spyro series, Mario 64, Zelda and Super Metroid.”

For a game of this type, Ratchet and Clank features some of the coolest weapons



ever, including a Morph-o-Ray (transforms enemies into poultry), a Teslaclaw that fires a bolt of electricity and the soon-to-be famous and fairly self-explanatory Suck Cannon.

There is a great feeling of freedom within the game, especially for a title of this nature – this is greatly aided by the fact that you can jump in your spaceship and fly away to a distant planet.

This is one of the slickest adventures ever on the PS2, the sheer size and effortless playability of Ratchet and Clank make it perfect for younger and older gamers alike.



"We really wouldn't call R&C a platform game - it's a lot more like an action-RPG! Since we've got an inventory system, vendors who sell you weapons and ammo and a big, sprawling story which DOESN'T involve collecting 100 identical widgets" - Insomniac



Founded in 1994, Insomniac is a California based development outfit: best known for creating the renowned Spyro series that moved a mammoth 8 million units for the original PlayStation. Gamefreaks was granted an audience with Insomniac to talk about their newest title.

Gamefreaks: Sum up Ratchet & Clank in fifty words or less.

Insomniac: In Ratchet & Clank, you get to play as Ratchet, a furry alien mechanic and as his robot buddy Clank, as you rocket from planet to planet trying to stop the evil Blarg from destroying most of the worlds in a far off galaxy. In the game you buy lots of very cool super-destructive weapons and futuristic gadgets. You end up using every one of these unique items to solve one of the biggest adventures ever made for the PS2.

GF: After Luigi's Mansion and Blinx the Time Sweeper, was Clank ever in danger of becoming a hoover?

Insomniac: Nope. Clank has always been more akin to a Swiss Army Knife. But we DO have the Suck Cannon. I think you've unearthed a hidden trend in character action games...

GF: Platform gaming is essentially 'old school' fun, what new tricks have you introduced with this new title?

Insomniac: I really wouldn't call R&C a platform game - it's a lot more like an action-RPG! Since we've got an inventory system, vendors who sell you weapons and ammo and a big, sprawling story which DOESN'T involve collecting 100 identical widgets, it's a lot different than most of the games that people consider "platformers".

GF: Ratchet and Clank features as many as 35 different tools and weapons: what are some of your favourites and why?

Insomniac: Everyone here has his or her preference but my favourite weapon is the Morph-o-Ray which turns enemies into chickens. Any weapon that has something to do with farm animals has a lot going for it...in my opinion. My favourite gadget is the Magneboots which allow you to walk upside down on special surfaces - it gives you a very different perspective of the worlds.

GF: Why did you decide to set the game in the future?

Insomniac: We picked a sci-fi theme for a few reasons. First, it gave us a lot of leeway in creating really cool gadgets, weapons and environments. Going with a sci-fi universe eliminates many of the constraints that you have if you're trying to do a more realistic game - or even a fantasy game like Spyro. Second, there are very few games out that use a sci-fi theme so picking that direction helped us make Ratchet & Clank stand out as being very different among the other character action games that are out this holiday. Finally, everyone here loves sci-fi movies, books, comics, etc. So we've all been heavily influenced by sci-fi for years and we finally had a chance to bring all of those influences together in a unique way for Ratchet and Clank.





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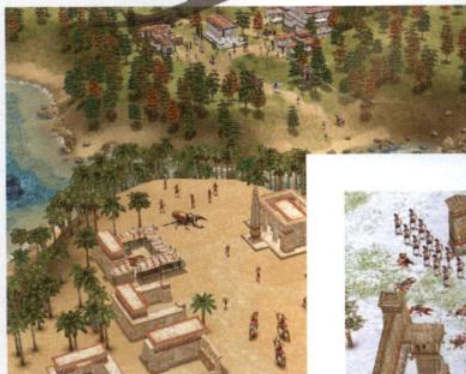


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AGE OF MYTHOLOGY

PLATFORM: PC ■ PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT ■ DEVELOPER: ■ PRICE: \$99.95 ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW



With its irresistible mélange of history, warfare tactics and resource management, the Age of Empires series has become the most successful real-time strategy franchise ever, selling over 10 million copies worldwide.

The brain behind the series is Bruce Shelley; Shelley visited our shores recently as part of a promotional tour to endorse Microsoft's upcoming PC titles and perched at the very top of that list is Age of Mythology.

Age of Mythology has taken an age to develop but the series has certainly evolved since Age of Empires II.

The aim was to create a bigger, bolder, more dynamic real-time strategy title: developers Ensemble (under the watchful eye of Shelley) knew that there was no point in churning out the same old Age of Empires.

The game plays quite similar to other Age titles at first – you choose a culture and then guide your people through the various stages of their evolution by gathering standard resources and working your way up the Tech Tree.

The game may appear fairly similar to previous instalments in these screenshots but Age of Mythology has turned a corner and marks a new beginning for the series

The cultures this time include Greeks and the Egyptians with the Norseman rounding off the trio – each offering a uniquely different experience.

Each game begins with players selecting a primary god from a list of three – this god provides a focus for your people, he can bestow many advantages as well as crush enemies with acts of god (or god powers) which include everything from meteor strikes, lava, bolts of lightning, water spouts, or even a plague of locusts to inflict havoc on enemy crops.

Players still need to gather wood, food, gold and the like but the customary stone resource has been replaced by favor [or 'favour' if you prefer

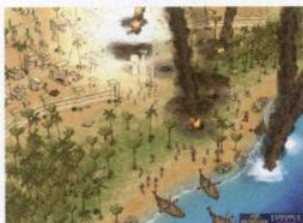
to use the Queen's English] – this is reward for your worship and as previously mentioned, appeasing the gods has various advantages.

God worship is different for all three cultures: the Egyptians construct elaborate monuments to win favor while the Greeks must pray before the temple, using up valuable man-hours.

The Norse are a little different in that their gods are best pleased through conquest so the Norse Raiders are forced to be almost constantly at war.

Minor gods also become available as your civilization develops – these can be used for a variety of everyday jobs.

A happy god is a good god and keeping them happy results





The addition of gorgeous 3D graphics and the introduction of mythological creatures and god powers are the most notable advancements in the game

in the creation of Myth units – 25 legendary creatures from ancient mythology like the Cyclops, Giants, the Minotaur can be used to lead your regular units and hero units into battle. Hero units are highly effective against Myth units who can destroy regular units with impunity – regular units can wipe out hero units creating a finely balanced, three pronged combat structure.

The game is built around a huge campaign, much broader in scope and more challenging than we saw in any of the previous Age of Empires titles. Developers Ensemble have created an epic story that tracks the life of an Atlantean hero from the world of the ancient Greeks, through the rise of Egyptian empire and finally to the ice-covered territory of the North.

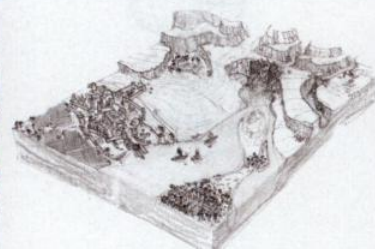
The hugely improved graphics

engine is a definite highlight and the depth of 3D hasn't slowed the game down any – gorgeous terrain, buildings as well as the three races look more detailed than ever.

Each unit is superbly animated, with dozens of realistic movements, especially while fighting and the god powers are beautifully realised, providing some eye-catching effects.

The age-old question of replayability is not really an issue here: Age of Mythology is virtually endless, with its map editor and online facilities, players will return again and again.

There is also an elaborate Collector's Edition available which contains various goodies – they're like hen's teeth and we've got one of these to give away: check out page 26 for more details.



Age of Mythology offers variety fit for the gods: more than 15 map types, 13 game variants and 5 starting conditions in its multiplayer line-up and the random map generator providing infinite possibilities





UNREAL TOURNAMENT 2003

PLATFORM: PC ■ PUBLISHER: INFOGRAMES ■ DEVELOPER: EPIC ■ PRICE: \$79.95 ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW



Even a casual editing session can quickly deliver your ideas into the game, and for the dedicated mod developer the full power of the mightiest 3D game engine is there to command.



It's been three years and the First Person Shooter landscape has seen some changes, so does Unreal Tournament 2003 do enough to get the attention of today's gamer?

In the technical department we're well satisfied. It looks great.

The effects and atmosphere lock you in with incredible detail so real you can trip over it – literally. Arena combat is about pressure cooker action and stunning visuals, and even on our mid-range box - PIII 733, 512mb RAM, Geforce 3 Ti 200 128mb – everything rocks at a mad pace and the gore flows thick and fast. Control is super

responsive and it's obvious that the game as a whole has been optimised for online team play – they've been working hard over those 3 years.

There's a few tweaks here and there with adrenaline collection and key-combo specials to activate power-ups instead of artefacts/runes, but apart from that whiff of console style play it's pretty much the same run and gun FPS. There won't be much in the way of retraining required for old hands, which is welcome news indeed!

The single player 'campaign' included with the game opens with a nicely worked cinematic, but really serves more as

a token story with a heavy training focus. All geared to get you online and fragging new friends asap. The instant action option is good but it's all about the multiplayer baby.

The level editor that ships with this is key to the future of the game, supporting 3D accelerated graphics in the editor is genius, letting designers see everything as it would appear in-game, importing textures/meshes is easy, scripting is right there and everything comes together with a rapid compile. Set to re-establish arena combat as a regular in the sports calendar, UT2003 does enough for a Mallowpuff and more.

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

PLATFORM: XBOX ■ PUBLISHER: EA GAMES ■ DEVELOPER: EA GAMES ■ PRICE: \$129.95 ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW



The film has dated and the shows' crap now too, so we didn't hold out too much hope for the EA's Buffy license on the Xbox.

All prejudice aside, the proof is in the pudding (Mmmmm, pudding) and having spent a few long nights alone with the slayer, it's fair to say that Buffy the game is full of surprises – mostly good ones.

Our first encounter with this title was during EA's Imagine preview event – the game was hidden away in a dark corner, overshadowed by Harry Potter, Lord of the Rings & Co but even a brief play of some unpredictable preview code showed off the games unquestionable potential.

For the unenlightened, there's a cool intro that gives a quick rundown of Buffy history 101 but once you're up to speed, its time for the opening tutorial.

This is a fairly subtle induction, walking players through some basic game controls and combat moves.

Our agile leading lady has a good array of tricks: she climbs, runs, jumps, just like a real Buffy.

She also unleashes some fierce attacks with flurries of punches, powerful kicks and the odd wooden stake is always



Along with the recurring grunts, Buffy offers up regular sarcasm and wisecracks like "you wanna piece of me? ...I'll give you the whole damn pie!" Mmmm...pie.

useful in her line of work.

Buffy can grapple with her opponents, or stake them through the heart or even throw them into an open fire or a spike on the wall.

Her more complex moves drain her slayer powers but these can be replenished by collecting various items, left by the monsters she slaughters.

The fighting is definitely a highlight with more than enough vampires as well as zombies and various ghoulish creatures to practice attack combos on.

New moves and combos are added to your repertoire

as you progress as well as some unusual weapons including a water pistol loaded with holy water and small yet deadly crossbow.

The graphics are solid throughout all the levels with reasonably accurate character modelling for Buffy and her co-stars from the TV series: all the actors except Sarah Michelle Gellar provided the voice talent for the game adding to the accurate ambience.

3D action titles are still scarce on the Xbox but Buffy the Vampire Slayer is a fun way to kick things off.

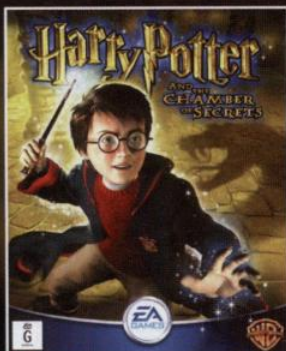
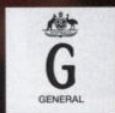


Buffy the Vampire Slayer looks a little like Tomb Raider sans the shorts, handguns and backpack but Buffy comes with generous number of attack combos that can be unlocked during the course of the game: beating the living daylights out of multiple opponents is wonderfully rewarding

Harry Potter

AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS

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GAME BOY ADVANCE



PlayStation 2

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STAR FOX ADVENTURES

PLATFORM:GAMECUBE ■ PUBLISHER:NINTENDO ■ DEVELOPER: NINTENDO ■ PRICE:\$129.95 ■ OUT NOW



Dinosaur Planet has been brought to life with phenomenal detail – the outdoor levels are teeming with life: plants can be seen visibly swaying in the breeze and the water effects are extraordinary

Veteran pilot Fox McCloud bids farewell to his famous Arwing Fighter as the franchise goes through an improbable metamorphosis from flying shooter to 3D action/adventure title.

Star Fox Adventures is the newest addition to the long running Nintendo series and will apparently be the last: renowned developers Rare were recently purchased by Microsoft and will now be creating Xbox exclusives.

The gameplay is a mixed bag, made up mostly of Zelda-like 3D adventuring and almost endless variety: the fox runs, swims, jumps, climbs, fights, rides rocket-powered snow sleds, pilots the Arwing: and that's just the first half hour.

Upon landing on Dinosaur Planet, Fox finds a magic staff that later comes in handy for clubbing enemies and with its numerous power-ups, becomes a formidable weapon that will take out most of the bad guys in the game.

When it comes to solving the game's various quests, usually you'll need to gather a number of items or Scarabs (little bugs are the currency on Dinosaur World) in order to get ahead.

Dinosaur Planet has its own time zone (similar Zelda), including night and day that cycle endlessly giving a distinct atmosphere to the prehistoric world and showing off the full range of lighting effects.

Star Fox Adventures is a must own title that stretches the Gamecube's graphics capabilities to their very limits: arguably the best looking game on any system.



WRC II EXTREME

PLATFORM:PLAYSTATION 2 ■ PUBLISHER:SCE ■ DEVELOPER: INHOUSE ■ PRICE: PS2 \$119.95 ■ RELEASE:OUT NOW



The original WRC was a great looking Rally title but the difficult handling made it tough to master.

This sequel looks likely to battle it out with Colin McRae Rally 3.0 and Rally Fusion for the top spot on the PS2 this Christmas.

Any handling problems of the past have melted away – the delicate balance required for a good Rally title needs to be challenging enough to keep you hooked but not so hard that you become discouraged because you're spending more time in the trees than on the track: WRC II Extreme has the mix just right.

Boasting an official license WRC II Extreme is crammed with authentic touches, including all 14 rounds, complete with all 155 stages made up of over 800 kilometres of gravel, mud, tarmac and snow.

WRC II Extreme combines six single-player modes and greater multiplayer options via traditional split screen methods and an Alternate Championship, where four players can compete for the best time through a series of races.

The excellent single player Championship mode follows the same format of the real thing, with each event taking place over a four day schedule - players need to allot time for repairs and maintenance in-between stages which provides even greater incentive to avoid damage.

The visuals have certainly improved with greater detailed tracks and the cars in particular are looking better with more than twice the polygons but the sound is noticeably improved with engine audio samples from every single WRC car.



With its glossy UI and a well known tune from the Chemical Brothers, WRC II Extreme is the slickest looking Rally title around

TIMESPLITTERS 2

PLATFORM:XBOX ■ PUBLISHER:INFOGRAMES ■ DEVELOPER: FREE RADICAL ■ PRICE: \$129.95 ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW



Developers Free Radical promised a vastly improved one-player experience and this is evident from the moment you sit down to play

A couple of issues ago, we heralded the PS2 release of Timesplitters 2: the fantastic new first-person shooter from the creative minds at Free Radical.

Free Radical is a breakaway group of Rare developers, who previously worked on Rare classics like GoldenEye 007 and Perfect Dark.

Later we received a copy of Timesplitters 2 for the Xbox which is an entirely different prospect for us because at Gamefreaks HQ, Halo is king – other mission-based console shooters tend to pale in comparison.

As in the original, the plot once again places you in pursuit of evil aliens hellbent on destroying earth by vandalising history – playing as one of two marines, you not only have to destroy said aliens, but you must travel back in time to recover nine crystals [one for each level] that allow the Timesplitters to travel through the space time continuum.

Like the original, the different in locations and time periods allow for huge variety in weaponry – the nine wildly diverse levels of Timesplitters 2 will take you to places such as Aztec temples, Chicago in the 1920s and Neo-Tokyo 2019.

There are tons of customisable multiplayer options as well as Xbox system link support, allowing players to network numerous TVs and consoles: the revamped map maker lets you create your own story levels and death match scenarios, making the game almost endless.

Timesplitters 2 is a remarkable Xbox title and the perfect substitute for Halo fans searching for a worthy new adventure.



BLINX THE TIME SWEEPER

PLATFORM:XBOX ■ PUBLISHER:MICROSOFT ■ DEVELOPER: ARTOON ■ PRICE: \$129.95 ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW



With time on his side and his faithful vacuum cleaner, Blinx must work his way through countless levels, purchasing various gadgets along the way

When it comes to platform games, they all tend to follow the blueprint popularised by Nintendo's premier pint-sized, pipe cleaner, Mario.

Essentially there's lots of running, jumping, climbing, collecting of random objects and general yahoing.

Blinx the Time Sweeper contains numerous Nintendo influences, including the vacuum cleaner made famous (well, sort of) in Luigi's Mansion.

And there's the mandatory "cute animal" lead character - in this case a wide-eyed cat that wears goggles and steel-capped boots.

On an alien planet inhabited mostly by kitty cats, Blinx is just another fuzzy face in the crowd at the Time factory, until he decides to rescue the princess, kidnapped by the malevolent Tom-Tom gang: a bunch of time thieves selling stolen time.

Blinx, at least on the surface, looks like a fairly conventional 3D platformer, though the wonderful visuals are far from ordinary.

Blinx has several unique features; the most exciting being the lead characters ability to manipulate time.

When you collect Time Crystals players are able to pause or slow down time, making enemies painless to deal with, rewind time (to restore life) or even record time, and replay the level later cooperatively with your pre-recorded self.

This is a huge game, and it's definitely not easy: there are demanding boss battles at the end of each world and you're always racing the clock.



FIFA FOOTBALL 2003

PLATFORM: PLAYSTATION 2 ■ PUBLISHER: EA GAMES ■ DEVELOPER: EA GAMES ■ PRICE: \$129.95 ■ OUT NOW



EA Sports' long running footy franchise has been rebuilt from the bootlaces up, with a smart new user interface that lets you navigate through the myriad of options with ease.

FIFA 2003 features an impressive list of new features, including a Club Championship mode that lets you pick from 20 of Europe's top club sides, each with their own stadium.

All the Euro glamour clubs even come with real crowd sounds providing a genuinely atmospheric effect when playing away.

FIFA 2003 has a spanking new control system that will take some getting used to for fans of the series.

Being old hands at FIFA we selected 'semi-professional', thinking we would ease into the game but man were we wrong!

The AI is tough, the opposition swoop on you when you have possession and the passing requires much more deft touches and placement.

Mashing furiously at the controller, we soon realised that this new control system was totally Greek to us, yet the overall feel of the game is now far more realistic.

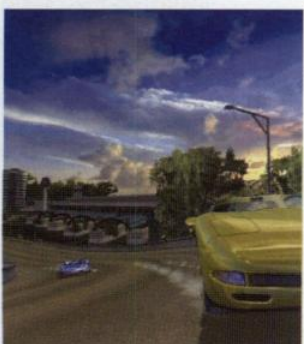
The games different settings will allow for an easy initiation and in an interesting touch, the game will pause and suggest that you lower your difficulty setting: or in other words, you're out of your depth.

With all the players (the likenesses are getting creepily close), teams, leagues, cups and the kitchen sink thrown in too, fans of this franchise will love this latest evolution and perhaps it will sway a few non-believers as well.



NEED FOR SPEED HOT PURSUIT 2

PLATFORM: XBOX ■ PUBLISHER: EA GAMES ■ DEVELOPER: EA GAMES ■ PRICE: \$129.95 ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW



When the first Hot Pursuit title hit the original PlayStation, it left gamers stunned and craving more.

The newly released sequel is available across numerous platforms: we featured the PS2 version on the cover a few issues ago but this new Xbox version is worth going over again.

The leap in graphics quality (over its PS2 counterpart) is more than just noticeable: it's comparable to what we've seen in the past when earlier titles from this series have graduated from the PlayStation to the PC.

Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2 also supports Dolby Digital 5.1, with great results.

Hot Pursuit 2 is an arcade-style racer so there is less focus on realism and more on fun and playability.

There are several game modes, including Hot Pursuit Championship which gives you a branching structure where you can unlock tracks, cars etc by winning medals.

Single Challenge mode contains several options, the most interesting one being 'Be a Cop' where players can embark on a career of busting motoring menaces – there's also Lap Knockout where you race seven laps with the last across the line eliminated and the winner takes all.

This is essentially the same game as we saw on the PS2 a month or so back but there is no denying the pretty graphics and sound elevate this Xbox version above its console counterparts.



With 12 lengthy, open-road courses, 20 luxury cars and the return of 'Pursuit Mode', Hot Pursuit 2 has been well worth the wait

QUANTUM REDSHIFT

PLATFORM:XBOX ■ PUBLISHER:MICROSOFT ■ DEVELOPER: CURLY MONSTERS ■ PRICE: \$129.95 ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW



There are four views and the HUD provides somewhat useful information but we found that the game looks better with it turned off

Quantum Redshift is the new futuristic racer for the Xbox where second place simply will not do.

Players are forced to up skill or risk eternal shame of unopened tracks and only a win will advance you.

The game begins with character selection and you are assigned a planet and a home track to defend – there are sixteen characters in total, nine of which will need to be unlocked.

You're also given a high-speed ship, a Single Person Armed Racing Craft or SPARC fitted out with weapons, turbo and shields, all of which can be upgraded.

The inevitable comparisons to WipeOut aside, the game actually feels more like Star Wars RACER (first seen on the N64) when you're playing – the width of the tracks, in places, and the varied terrain allow for speeds of up to 900 miles per hour.

Realistic rain effects (similar to Colin McRae Rally 3.0) and the super speedy frame rate are just two of the highlights in this game that is bulging with eye candy.

There are several ways to play including Tournament, Time attack, Quick Race and Multiplayer options for up to four players using quad split screen.

The sharp cornering will take some getting used to and we found the automatic reset especially handy.

The in game music is fairly routine electronic fair but you can select your own soundtrack, using your favourite tunes stored on the Xbox's hard drive.



HITMAN 2

PLATFORM:PS2 ■ PUBLISHER:INFOGRAMES ■ DEVELOPER: EIDOS ■ PRICE: \$129.95 ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW



We got to take a look at this game on both the Xbox and the PS2 and give or take a few polygons and textures, there's not a lot of difference.

If you're unfamiliar with the PC original, the gameplay focuses on the exploits of Agent 47, a ruthless killer for hire who goes about his work with a disturbing degree of composure.

47 is forced out of retirement when his friend the priest is kidnapped.

Requiring help from his underworld contacts, he finds he must do them a few favours in return.

The gameplay hasn't changed much from the original formula with each mission containing various objectives but rarely are they spelled out in much detail – some will find this somewhat annoying but we enjoyed the open ended, non-linear aspects.

There are a good variety of weapons and it's up to you to work out how to best achieve your objectives - trial and error does come into it and you'll find yourself restarting time and again if you're careless.

This is not a fast paced action title, full of gun battles and cheap action – Hitman 2 is a thinking man's game, often slow in pace and frustratingly difficult at times.

The overall style of the game is definitely a hook - the gigantic maze-like levels are overflowing with eye-catching detail and clever lighting and shadowing affects.

Any game that features shady underworld characters is okay with us – Hitman 2 is in stores now.



LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS

PLATFORM: GAMECUBE ■ PUBLISHER: EA GAMES ■ PRICE: \$99.95 ■ OUT NOW



Swoosh! Hacking up Orcs on the GBA never gets old: this game features as many as 100 action packed levels

It's mine! My own...my precious...my copy of The Lord of the Rings The Two Towers on the GBA!

Yes indeed, the Lord of the Rings is now isometric on the little screen and proof that power can be held in the smallest of things.

Based entirely on the Peter Jackson film trilogy, this game lets you take control of Frodo, Aragorn, Legolas, Gandalf and other characters from the first two films.

As Aragorn, players can get in amongst the action, hacking their way to glory, or you can choose to stand back, calmly picking enemies off with your bow or magic.

Each character has an inventory where you can mix and match key items and weaponry.

The game takes place in various memorable settings from the films, with the plot taking a definite back seat to the action.

The levels are a never-ending mêlée with hordes of Orcs, goblins and five level bosses including Saruman and they have a cave troll.

The best feature is the two player multiplayer options via the GBA's link cable which lets you form a Fellowship with a friend and battle the evil forces of Mordor in this handheld epic - let's hunt some Orc!



GAME & WATCH GALLERY ADVANCE

PLATFORM: XBOX ■ PUBLISHER: NINTENDO ■ DEVELOPER: NINTENDO ■ PRICE: \$99.95 ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW



Before the days of Game Boy Advance or even Game Boy, Nintendo we're making portable games that could be played either on a tiny LCD devices or even on LCD wrist watches.

The game is split between Classic and Modern modes with a remarkable compilation of old classics and clever remakes, including Donkey Kong 3, Rainshowers, Boxing, Mario's Cement Factory, Fire Attack and many more.

The GBA Game Link cable lets you play through all 30 of these classic games with a friend.



Earn the high score in each of the games to collect stars: acquiring enough stars unlocks new games

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PlayStation.2



OUT THIS MONTH...



BURNOUT 2
ALL FORMATS ■ ROADSHOW

This is arcade style racing at its volatile best - it's a lot quicker than the original with more tracks and cars, improved visuals, new weather effects, replays, multiplayer and some of the best collision ever to grace a video game.



NFL FEVER 2003
XBOX ■ MICROSOFT

It's not easy going up against EA's Madden franchise, though Sega did it and now Microsoft is doing it too. GM mode is the game's main highlight - guide your top team (Niners dude!) all the way to the super bowl.



TREASURE PLANET
PS1/PS2 ■ SCE

Treasure Planet is the fun, new Disney-inspired platform adventure title for the PS2 or PS one. Like Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, this game's release date has been timed to coincide with the animated film hitting cinemas.



THE SIMS
PS2 ■ EA GAMES

The best selling PC game ever is now on the PS2 - like the Sea Monkeys for a new millennium, you know you want The Sims you're just not sure why. With a cracked humour and addictive play, The Sims is a novel experience on the console.



HARRY POTTER
XBOX ■ EA GAMES

EA's Harry Potter juggernaut just keeps on rolling - now with more polygons than ever. This is essentially the same gameplay no matter what system you own but the graphics are somewhat more impressive on the Xbox.



COMMANDOS 2
XBOX ■ INFOGRAMES

Infogrames' WWII team-based strategy title is certainly doing the rounds. A little tricky without a mouse but not impossible, Commandos 2 is challenging and fun, especially if you can't resist putting those Nazis in their place.



SHOX
PS2 ■ EA BIG

EA have put a cool new spin on the ever popular Rally genre - no gritty realism here, this is pure arcade racing: fast, fun and brimming with SSX-like features, even fireworks that erupt every time you complete a stage - chr!



LINKS 2003
PC ■ MICROSOFT

With its revolutionary new 'hands on' control system, Links 2003 is taking this popular series to lofty new heights: even New Zealand's own beautiful Kauri Cliffs has been painstakingly recreated with the top courses around the world.



KELLY SLATER PRO SURFER
PS2 ■ ROADSHOW

Surfing games generally suck one way or another because at the end of the day, you cannot recreate the freedom of wave riding on your TV: that being said, Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer is probably the best attempt yet.



WRC ARCADE
PS one ■ SCE

SCE have adapted their high flying PS2 Rally title for the PS one: the idea is the same though the emphasis is now strictly on arcade-style action, thrills and spills, not brutal authenticity - so here's mud in your eye!



F1 2002
PS2 ■ SCE

Formula One racing can often be too serious for many console gamers; nevertheless, this is a typically stylish sequel from SCE: again they fall slightly short of EA's all-conquering F1 franchise but only by a kitten's whisker.



SUPERMAN
PS2 ■ INFOGRAMES

Gorgeous cel-shaded graphics aside, handling issues make this trickier than it needs to be. Especially when flying around Metropolis dealing with street crime and rescuing the odd busload of screaming kids.

WIN...

AGE OF MYTHOLOGY

Microsoft have given us a copy of the Age of Mythology Colelctor's Edition for some lucky punter owner to win. Answer the following to be in the draw .



"Which of the following was not a Mythological creature?"

- a) "Medusa" b) "Thor" c) "Barney "

RATCHET & CLANK PACKS



We have 2 copies of these cool Ratchet & Clank packs to be won! Each contains a copy of the game, t-shirt and keyring. Answer the question below and you will go in the draw to win .

"Name the PS2 platform title that featured on the cover of Gamefreaks last November"

- a) "Jak & Daxter" b) "Hall and Oates" c) "Sonny and Cher"

BLINX THE TIME SWEEPER

For Xbox, we have 3 copies of the new platformer Blinx the Time Sweeper to be won. Answer the following question to go in the draw.



"What type of device does Blinx carry through the game?"

- a) "Cell phone"
b) "Metal detector"
c) "Vacuum cleaner"

PS2 EXCLUSIVES



SCENZ has offered up something a little different this month: you can win your choice of ANY 3 PlayStation 2 exclusives by just naming the 3 that want!

So write the names of the 3 titles (PS2 exclusives only remember) on the back of an envelop and send it in to us to go in the draw!

HOW TO ENTER

Write your name, phone number and contact details on the back of the envelope, list the prize you're after and you will need to include the correct answer. All correct entries immediately go into the draw to win. Send to:

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All winners for this month's competitions will be notified before December 8, 2002

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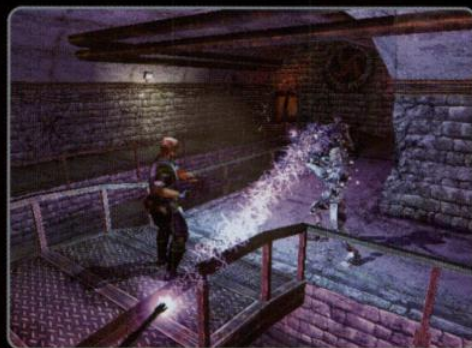
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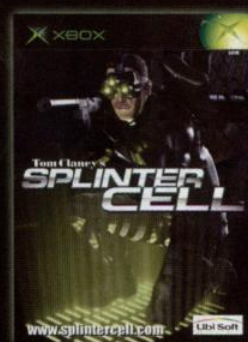
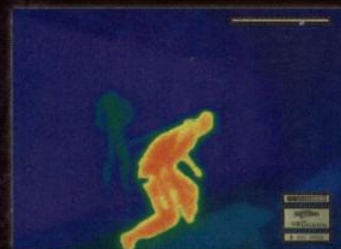
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